

So we have established that there are not going to be any cuts in Medicare. So how do we deal with it? We say, "Mr. President, that is exactly what we have proposed in this Congress." So how is it that President Clinton proposes a reduced growth rate and it seems acceptable and yet, when the Republicans propose the exact same thing, it is splashed all over papers and televisions and all across our States by the folks on the other side of the aisle as "devastating cuts." I think it is time for a little fairness here, and I also advise all of us, you cannot have it both ways.

So if you do not like the cuts, let us just freeze them. Think about that for a little bit. We will freeze it at levels right now. I am wondering if that will be acceptable to the other side. The senior Senator from Montana recently wrote a guest column in the *Missoula paper*. He said, "There is no crisis here." Their report clearly states the crisis needs to be urgently addressed. It does not say we should start to think about maybe making some changes. It says now is the time to do it. That is, deal with it when we have the ability to deal with it. We cannot stick our heads in the sand, not for very long anyway, because you know what is exposed the most.

We have to worry about the financing. Any savings in this plan—any savings—even in part B, goes back into the plan. It can go nowhere else. It must stay in the system of Medicare, either part A, which is the hospital trust fund, or part B, which is the dollars. It has to stay there. Any savings goes back into the plan. It can go nowhere else. It can finance no other part of government. So the trustees' report requires us to act.

Anyone who says otherwise is not being very candid with the American people. It is not being very honest if we are to preserve the system while expanding the choices the beneficiaries will have if we do nothing at all. With the proposal now on the table, spending continues to increase around 6.4 percent a year. That is twice the rate of inflation. That means spending per beneficiary will go from \$4,800 a year to \$6,700 in just 7 short years. And I ask you, can that be a cut?

So when the other side and the media say we are cutting Medicare to give tax cuts to the rich—we have heard all about that—it sells good but it "ain't" necessarily so. In fact, it is not so.

A colleague of mine recently remarked the new Democratic mascot should be the ostrich. We do not want to get into a situation like that.

I also heard the expression other day that maybe it is not Medicare, maybe it is "Mediscare." Every day is Halloween for the other side, because they just like to scare folks.

Mr. President, I say to my colleagues, we are trying to be honest with America, just honest with America. Get the figures down and make sure that we do what this report says

we should do and also maybe accept some leadership from our President who said, yes, we have to do some things, and he said it on October 5, 1993.

I do not think he is too far off the mark, and I do not think America thinks that either. I know we do not, and we have undertaken this very, very seriously.

Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks time?

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for up to 15 minutes following the presentation of the Senator from Missouri.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

TERM LIMITS

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, the 1994 elections were elections about reform. Those of us sent here by the people of America were asked to make substantial changes in the way this body conducts business, the way in which Government is carried out in this country. The people asked us to make significant changes. In return, we made promises which resulted in their entrusting to us the sacred opportunity to serve the people. The promises we made were important promises. They were promises to end politics as usual, to curtail an imperial Congress. They were promises to balance the budget. They were promises to change the welfare system profoundly.

Mr. President, I believe they were important promises. I believe they were promises upon which the people relied, and have a substantial expectation. We have made progress in satisfying those promises in a significant way.

Earlier this year, the American people were optimistic about our efforts, about our willingness to change Washington. This fall, though, the American people tell a different story. Those who keep their finger on the pulse of the American public have indicated a signal from the people—a serious discomfort with what is coming. The public's faith in their elected officials has again plummeted to an all-time low. Once more, Ross Perot, talks about putting an end to the two-party system, and once more he is heard.

What has happened? What is the reason for the new season of discontent? I

believe it is, in part, because the people have asked us to commit to the reforms we promised and they feel that some of their agenda is being ignored. One of those agenda items which we have not directly addressed, that we have not spoken too clearly on, one that is on the minds of the American people indelibly, is the idea and concept of term limits. People are familiar with that. Forty Governors have term limits. Twenty-three States have, out of their own capacity and ability, attempted to impose term limits on the Congress. They see the Congress as being a place which bogs down in beltway politics instead of reflecting the agenda of America, and does so because of individuals who come here and just stay. Certainly, it is an agenda that the people expected us to carry forward. Seventy-four percent of the people support the concept of term limits. They believe, and I believe, it ought to be a part of the agenda of the 104th Congress.

Leadership is about the messages that we send, the signals we give—signals not of rhetoric but of action, signals of real reform. Last March, our class came to the floor to support a constitutional amendment to balance the budget. We spoke of a common commitment to change and a new day in the Congress. It mattered very little that we fell short of the 67 votes we needed. It was clear what we were doing and the depth of our commitment and the sense of our real dedication to that objective. I think the people understood there were some who stood in the way of that objective. But what truly mattered was the signal we sent as a class. It was a signal of promises made and promises kept.

What matters is that we fought the fight, we kept the faith, we kept our promise, and we will keep moving toward that objective. We have already moved toward the objective in the budget, and we are moving toward the objective in the appropriations, and we will again move toward that objective by way of a resolution to have a constitutional amendment.

We must decide what signals we will be sending this fall as the American people monitor our performance. It is out of concern for those signals that I believe we should vote on a sense-of-the-Senate amendment relating to the limitation of terms of Members of Congress. We are talking about the number of terms people in the Congress can serve.

This afternoon, barring any legislative maneuvering, we will have a vote on that amendment. It will be the first time in 50 years that there has been a vote on term limits in the U.S. Senate. I believe it will be an important vote, it will be a historic vote. It does not carry with it the power of law, so it is not a binding amendment. It is, however, an identifying amendment. It is the power of a clear and principled statement of the purpose and resolve of